

# Possible Outcomes of Meditation – Samadhi, Jhana, Magga Phala

1. As we discuss in the following posts, meditation is of two types: one is done at all times, being “morally mindful”, and then the other type is the formal meditation where one contemplates on a given “procedure” while sitting down or walking.

- In Buddhist meditation, the first is more important than the second.

2. Then there are three possible outcomes of meditation: *samadhi*, *jhana*, and *magga phala*.

3. One gets to *samadhi* by focusing the mind on one thing. Normally a mind jumps incessantly from one thing to another: a sound pulls the mind one way, a sight another way, smell, etc., and the mind itself likes to jump around. Regardless of the cause, this makes the mind tired, but unless one has experienced *samadhi*, or especially *jhana*, one may not even realize that one’s mind is constantly under stress; of course we do realize it when a deadline approaches and the mind goes to overdrive. One can truly appreciate this only after experiencing the tranquility of a focused mind. The mind gets “sensitized” as one gets to *samadhi*.

- Most people do not realize how “inherently stressed” our minds are. We get used to things, and do not feel even hardships. Only when we get to a “better state” we feel the difference, and then it is hard to go back to the “lower state”. For example, one who has lived a life of poverty has gotten used to it. Even though once in a while one thinks about the “better life” enjoyed by some others, one does not think about that all the time. However, if one is able to upgrade the lifestyle to a higher level, then one can FEEL the difference and now it will be very difficult to go back. One becomes “sensitized”. We will encounter this word “sensitized” in many cases when we discuss the *Satipatthana sutta*.
- Most people meditate to get some “peace of mind”, to get some relief from the pressures of hectic life. That is a form of *samadhi*. When one focuses on a neutral object, like breath, one gets to such a “neutral kind of *samadhi*”.
- There are three kinds of *samadhi* when categorized according to morality, i.e., what the focus is on: *micca samadhi* and two types of *samma samadhi*, one mundane (for living a better life) and one supermundane (focusing on *Nibbana*).
- There is a post on different types of *samadhi*: “[What is Samadhi? – Three Kinds of Mindfulness](#)”.

4. *Jhana* is a deeper level of *samadhi*, where the mind really gets absorbed in the object (*arammana*). Then the tranquility is optimized, and there are eight levels of *jhanas*: the first four are the ones experienced by beings in the 16 realms of the *rupa loka*, and the last four in the 4 realms of the *arupa loka*.

- *Jhanas* CANNOT be attained via *micca samadhi*.
- The *jhanas* attained via *samma samadhi* are two types, corresponding to *Ariya jhanas* and *anariya jhanas*; see, “[Power of the Human Mind – Anariya or Mundane Jhanas](#)” and “[Power of the Human Mind- Ariya Jhanas](#)”.
- Even though one can get to *anariya jhanas* by just focusing on the breath, it does require one to live a moral life. One who is not at least following the conventional five precepts will not be able to cultivate them.
- Of course the uniqueness of Buddhist meditation is the supermundane *samma samadhi*, leading to *Ariya jhanas*, and the four stages of *Nibbana*.

5. Thus the highest levels of “peace of mind” are at the four stages of *Nibbana* or *magga phala*: *Sotapanna*, *Sakadagami*, *Anagami*, and *Arahant*. However, it is not necessary to PRACTICE *Ariya jhanas* in order to attain *magga phala*.

- For example, one could attain the *Sotapanna* stage without practicing *jhanas*. At the moment of one attains the *Sotapanna* stage, one automatically goes through the first *Ariya jhana*, but unless one has practiced it before, a *Sotapanna* cannot automatically get into a *jhana*. However, it will be easy for a *Sotapanna* to attain *jhanas* with practice.

6. To get to *Ariya jhanas*, one focuses on *Nibbana* (or more precisely recall one's own "cooling down"): see, "[Power of the Human Mind- Ariya Jhanas](#)". **But before one can use this technique to attain *Ariya jhanas*, one needs to attain the *Sotapanna* stage; see #7 below.** This is a point that I have clarified only recently.

- Basically, one sits down in a quiet place, and first contemplates on *anicca, dukkha, anatta*, for a little while, and then keep repeating the following (or the English translation; what matters is one has to have the understanding): "*Ethan santhan ethan paneethan, yadidan sabba sankhara samatho, Sabbhupathi patinissaggo, tanhkkhayo, virago, nirodho, Nibbanan ti*", which means, "It is the only peace, the only happiness: prevent *sankhara* from arising (via) eliminating *tanha* and excess greed, and thus stopping the arising of defilements, which is *Nibbana*".
- The reciting of a certain phrase (meaningfully, with understanding) is called a "*kammasthana*". A given meditation technique is also called a *kammasthana*.
- Two important points to keep in mind: (1). One can either say it out quietly, or say it in one's mind, (2) This is not chanting; just saying the words will be just a waste of time. One needs to comprehend, to some extent, what is meant by *anicca, dukkha, anatta, i.e.*, some idea of what *Nibbana* (or "cooling down" is).
- If one has experienced any kind of "cooling down" it is best to recall that while saying the above phrase. For example, if one does not flare up like one used to, or if one has less attachment to things, that is the best to recall.

7. Since one cannot focus the mind on *Nibbana* without first experiencing it at least at the *Sotapanna phala* moment, one cannot get to *Ariya jhanas* without first reaching the *Sotapanna* stage.

- Even though the *Sotapanna phala* moment comes and goes without one really noticing it like getting a message of the sort, "OK. You have reached the *Sotapanna* stage", one starts feeling the "cooling down" afterwards. This is a hard thing to explain and actually it takes a while before one truly realizes that one has attained it.
- The bottom line is that one needs to reach the *Sotapanna* stage before getting to *Ariya jhanas*. If one suspects that one has reached the *Sotapanna* stage, one can use the procedure in #6 above to cultivate the first *jhana*.
- Unlike the *Sotapanna* stage, it is relatively easy to confirm the attainment of the *jhana*, because one's *Ariya jhana* cannot be disturbed by even forcefully thinking immoral thoughts. So, if one can confirm that one has reached even the first *Ariya jhana*, that means one is also a *Sotapanna*.

8. Thus reaching *magga phala* and *Ariya jhanas* REQUIRE the understanding of *anicca, dukkha, anatta*, the Three Characteristics of existence. Without the "correct vision" or *samma ditthi* at some level, the mind does not see the unfruitful nature of sense pleasures or the "superiority" of *niramisa sukha*.

Next, "[Are you not getting expected results from meditation?](#) ", .....